(b) the steps proposed by Government for such recruitment during 2009?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

One-rank one-pension for ex-servicemen

278. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the hunger strike by ex-servicemen at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi; and

(b) if so, what steps Government is taking to address the grievances of over 2.8 million ex-servicemen and their families relating to one-rank one-pension?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI M.M. PALLAM RAJU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The demand for one rank-one pension stands already examined in detail and was not found acceptable due to administrative, financial and legal reasons. Moreover, the pensionary benefits of the Personnel Below Officer Rank, particularly of the three ranks of Sepoy, Naik and Havildar, were significantly increased w.e.f. 1.1.2006 by increasing weightage from 5 years to 10, 8 and 6 years respectively and by allowing pension of pre 1.1.1996 retirees to be computed with reference to the maximum of the pay-scale introduced w.e.f 01.01.1996. In consultation with Ministry of Finance, the benefits thus accrued to PBOR have been allowed to be retained while revising their pension as per Government decision on the 6th CPC recommendations w.e.f. 1.1.2006. However, the Government is also examining whether certain improvements can be made in the pension being given to the old pensioners.

Shortage of spares

279. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether 400 odd Bofors guns bought in 1980s are falling apart for want of spares and 600 Shilka anti-aircraft cannons are in desperate need of upgradation;

(b) if so, the factors responsible for it; and

(c) the details of the measures taken to ensure quality and timely equipment supply to armed forces in order to improve defence preparedness?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) Availability of spares for normal routine repairs and overhaul of Bofors guns is adequate and the equipment is in sound condition.

The Schilka anti-aircraft weapon system is already undergoing upgradation, for which trials have been completed and further technical evaluations are in progress.

(c) The quality and timely supply of equipment to the armed forces is ensured by quality control based on feedback from user units, forecasting of equipment requirements through perspective planning and adhering to the procurement process laid down in the Defence Procurement Procedure.